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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UG](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: UGANDA/DRC: MORE ON LAKE ALBERT CONFRONTATION

REF: KINSHASA 1150

Classified By: P/E Chief Kathleen FitzGibbon for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)  
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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy Kampala follow-up on the incidents on Lake Albert confirm basic elements of the confrontation (retel). The details of the second incident remain in question and under investigation by a joint FARDC-MONUC-UPDF team. MONUC said that the UPDF fired unprovoked on a civilian ferry. The UPDF, which was withholding judgment pending its own internal investigation, said that the UPDF patrol boat engaged in a firefight with a FARDC patrol. Nonetheless, MONUC puts the casualty figures at six Congolese civilians confirmed dead, another six possibly killed, and five wounded. One FARDC soldier was killed. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Post has been able to corroborate most of the details contained in reftel despite conflicting versions circulating about the incidents on Lake Albert on September ¶24. Defense Liaison Officer met with Kampala-based MONUC sources knowledgeable about the investigation, who confirmed that there were two separate incidents on September 26. According to MONUC in Kampala, the first incident was when MONUC intercepted and escorted the Heritage Oil boat from where it had been pulling up seismic cables to Kasenyi to prevent a possible clash with a Congolese military boat operating in the area. The Heritage Oil boat was released after four hours. The second incident involved a Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces' patrol boat with about 12-15 soldiers aboard that stopped a regularly-scheduled ferry transporting 60 people between Rukwanzi and Kasenyi. On board were two FARDC soldiers. The UPDF ordered the FARDC to disarm. The FARDC soldiers refused. The UPDF reportedly opened fire unprovoked. Six Congolese civilians were reported dead, another six--allegedly children--also may have been killed, and five were wounded. One FARDC soldier was killed.

¶3. (C) UPDF leaders maintain that the details of the situation remain murky. Lt. Gen. Katumba Wamala said that there were three MONUC boats that intercepted the Heritage Oil vessel. The UPDF said that the Heritage Oil boat, mistakenly thinking that the approaching boats belonged to "negative forces," put out an SOS call to which the UPDF's patrol boats responded. At least one of the UPDF boats followed the MONUC-escorted Heritage boat close to Kasenyi. Wamala, who apparently was in real-time contact with the patrol boat, ordered UPDF boats not to approach any further. He verified MONUC's good treatment of the Heritage crew, but described MONUC's action as "aggravating" the situation on the water.

¶4. (C) According to Wamala, the second incident was a firefight between the UPDF and a FARDC patrol boat. DLO relayed other versions of the firefight story to Wamala. He said that he requested photographs of the UPDF patrol boat to establish whether or not it had been engaged with hostile

shooters. Wamala directed Chief of Military Intelligence Col. Leopold Kyanda to investigate and take part in the joint FARDC-MONUC-UPDF investigation.

15. (SBU) Julius Kagamba Singoma, the Director for East Africa and the Ring States, told P/E chief on September 25 that Uganda may formally protest MONUC's action, but needed more details of the events before doing so. He said that the Ugandan Government does not want this incident to undermine the progress between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda at Arusha and added that it highlighted the need for border demarcation and continued cooperation.

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